



Coast Guard Flag Voice 34

ENLISTED CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (ECDP)

From NOV 96 through AUG 98, three analysis teams conducted critical enlisted workforce studies: the Nonrate Workforce Structure Study (NWSS), Petty Officer Development Initiative (PODI), and Chief Petty Officer Needs Assessment (CPONA). These analyses since have been integrated into a comprehensive performance support plan -- the Enlisted Career Development Program (ECDP) -- for the entire enlisted workforce, from the time of initial accession (recruitment) through advancement to and performance at E-9.

From its inception, the ECDP focused on enlisted members' actual needs. Composed of members from operational units Coast Guard-wide, the study teams used the Coast Guard's goals, missions, and unit needs to target the enlisted workforce's desired performance. At each step in the studies, the teams gathered input from the field.

The first of the studies, the Nonrate Workforce Structure Study, was chartered to comprehensively analyze the complete Coast Guard enlisted accession system, encompassing what has been called "the three-team commitment" of Recruiting, Recruit Training, and nonrates' On-The-Job Performance (at their first units). To meld these three elements into a unified accession system, the NWSS examined and linked all the processes from potential applicants' initial attraction to the Coast Guard to their development as productive members in the field.

As NWSS sought to determine which nonrate work is truly career-enhancing, questions arose as to what we mean by "career." What does or should this career look like? What the job entails at the senior end of the enlisted career is important if we are to properly describe the entry-level job.

To find the answer, the CPO Needs Assessment focused intensely on the senior levels of an enlisted career, where E-6 technicians make the transition to front-line E-7 managers. Like the NWSS, this study began with the end state in mind. It sought to answer the question, "What does the Coast Guard expect of its CPO corps and what professional preparation does a selected E-6 need to fulfill these expectations?"

Finally, as NWSS and CPONA took shape, it became obvious these analyses provided critical but still only two anchors to an entire enlisted developmental plan from prospective enlistee to CPO. In other words, once we define both nonrates' and chiefs' roles and performance, then the pay grades in between should incorporate successive development levels. What was lacking was a sequence of developmental building blocks from one to the other. Defining this sequence became the mission of the PODI, which looked at the NWSS and CPONA as two end points that must be connected by our petty officers'

professional development. Put simply, the NWSS defined one end of the spectrum (E1, E2, E3), the CPONA defined the other end (E6 to E7), and the PODI defined the bridge between them (E4 to E6).

When the three studies were completed, we made a substantial effort to validate these analyses before we implemented any of their recommendations. This entailed an unparalleled series of visits to field commands, both large and small, throughout the Coast Guard to publicize the studies' purposes, findings, and recommendations to the Service at large and conduct focus groups to gather feedback. As a result, almost 10,000 Coast Guard men and women were personally briefed on ECDP projects; they virtually unanimously supported project results. This turned out to be an extraordinary opportunity to tap into thousands of Coast Guard members' collective wisdom, resulting in solid recommendations.

The Commandant recently reviewed and approved the ECDP report and recommendations. Implementing the ECDP is a sound business decision and will have a lasting positive impact in terms of enlisted workforce development, performance, morale, and retention. In the spirit of "Preparation Equals Performance," the ECDP will best prepare the future "Guardians of the Sea."

Major ECDP recommendations:

New recruiting curriculum developed, focusing on marketing and selling rather than administrative processes; several classes already completed with rave reviews.

New recruit training curriculum drafted and in review.

New Company Commander curriculum completed; first new class convenes this spring; Electronic Performance Support System also has been developed to ease their administrative workload.

New CPO Academy curriculum completed; first all E7 class recently graduated at the Coast Guard Academy.

Nonrate Advisory Committee established; two meetings held.

Revised Company Commander screening process in place.

The Training Analysis System (TAS) in final stages of development at Cape May. The TAS will measure the processes involved in recruit-training and improve data capture for more accurate accounting of attrition trends and causes.

Redesigned Enlisted Performance Evaluation Forms (Enlisted Advancement Study Team and EPEF QAT).

Senior Enlisted Needs Assessment under way (E8, E9, CMC); first meeting held.

As a result of the ECDP proposals, previously independent professional growth and training efforts will be brought together in new initiatives to provide a coordinated, innovative career development program. The ECDP identifies the "general" skills, knowledge, attitude, and abilities our enlisted workforce needs. The Senior Enlisted Needs Assessment will complete this picture. These "general" skills are totally aligned with the 21 Leadership Competencies identified in past Leadership Work Groups. It is worth noting these studies do not capture our workforce's TECHNICAL needs. Other independent yet related studies, such as the Joint Rating Review (JRR), are identifying those.

If you would like more information on the ECDP, its Executive Summary, Recommendations, a Forward by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, and the forwarding endorsement of RADM Barrett, Director of Reserve and Training, please go to the web at this address:

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wt/g-wtl/ecdp/index.htm>

COMDT (G-WT) is spearheading this project. Address inquiries or recommendations to YNCS Alex Keenan (G-WTL) at 202-267-2441, Email: Akeenana@uscg.mil.

Regards, FL Ames



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